

Review Articles

Carnegie Corporation and College Libraries, 1938-1943. Thomas R. Barcus. Carnegie Corporation of New York, 1943. 59p.

THIS LUCID, well-written report on the Carnegie Corporation program of book grants to college libraries since 1938 supplements and is patterned after William Warner Bishop's similar report for the period 1929-38. Together the two reports present a rounded statistical and narrative analysis of a unique, carefully planned effort of the corporation, under the supervision of Advisory Groups in Academic Libraries, to stimulate and vitalize, at the undergraduate level, the development of college library book collections in the United States and Canada. Extending over a period of fifteen years and involving the expenditure of \$2,600,000, including book grants to 172 colleges, this new departure in foundation giving has, as is made clear by both reports, been eminently successful.

During the period covered by Mr. Barcus, four programs of grants, to teachers' colleges, colleges for Negroes, state colleges, and technological colleges, extending to eighty libraries and requiring the expenditure of \$443,800, were carried out. The evaluation and selection of libraries for this new series of grants followed the same plan used for the earlier grants, of having experienced librarians visit and survey the libraries under consideration for grants.

An interesting and encouraging feature of all these book grants is that, contrary to most philanthropical giving, they have been deliberately planned to extend to

all parts of this country and Canada. That this effort has been successful is indicated by the fact that in the entire program there were only three states, Maine, Wyoming, and Nevada, in which no grants were made, and in two of these, Wyoming and Nevada, there probably were no libraries within the scope of the program.

The author sets forth the status of libraries in the various classes of colleges in which grants were made and the attitude toward them on the part of administrators, librarians, and faculty, in a manner which should make interesting and enlightening reading for library committees and college presidents. Considerable attention is given to the libraries in the colleges for Negroes, twenty-eight of which were selected for grants totaling \$100,000. While the conditions in these colleges as a group, and in their libraries, are not all that might be desired, the report makes it clear that substantial progress is being made. The number of Negro colleges has fallen sharply, from 653 in 1916 (many, however, not genuine colleges) to 110 now, but quality has improved markedly. Fifty-eight of the Negro colleges, or 51 per cent, enrolling 71 per cent of all Negro students, have now attained regional or national accreditation, although they do not always make as good a showing as colleges accredited elsewhere. Several of the Negro college libraries were found, by the advisory group visitors, to be giving a service which would be a credit to any institution.

Of great interest to the reviewer is the straight-forward and unequivocal discus-

sion of the library situation in the separate land-grant colleges, to which the advisory group, after careful consideration, decided not to extend aid. In these colleges investigators found no lack of money to support other activities but they decidedly did not find a financial support of the library comparable to that of colleges and universities generally. Only an average of 1.6 per cent of the total institutional budget in these colleges was found to be allocated to the library, as compared with 9.3 per cent in the arts colleges, 7.7 per cent in the junior colleges, 5.3 per cent in the teachers' colleges, and 4.4 per cent in the Negro colleges.

Libraries in Land-Grant Colleges

Mr. Barcus gives other evidence of lack of support of the library in these colleges and concludes that grants-in-aid will not remedy the situation. He states:

... It would seem that in most cases the fault lies primarily with a faculty and an administration that have little interest in libraries. Rarely does one find that there is an aroused interest but a lack of funds to implement it. ... To discover measures that will be effective in establishing the idea that the library is actually an important part of the institution and should be supported as such will require the best thought and effort of librarians, "library-minded" college administrators, association executives, and all those concerned over a badly neglected situation.

Perhaps this straight talking may make a slight dent on a condition which has shown itself largely impervious to earlier critical analysis, such as that of the 1928 survey of land-grant colleges, and, as many a well-meaning college library ad-

ministrator knows to his sorrow, to ordinary logic and argument.

Centralized Book Purchasing

A valuable section of the report is the discussion of the centralized book purchasing program, through which \$1,800,000 has been expended for books at a considerable saving to grantee libraries. In handling this extensive business a body of experience has been acquired and procedures developed which may conceivably be useful in the increased library co-operation which will undoubtedly come in the postwar period.

This program of book grants to a great variety of institutions represents the most difficult kind of giving. Unless carefully and conscientiously managed, such a distribution might well result in aggravating regional jealousies, charges of favoritism, and a frittering away of money in small sums. Instead we have had a general vitalization of college libraries and a raising of their standards which could not possibly have been achieved by an equal single grant of money to one library to serve as a shining example. The success of the whole program, now completed, is a tribute to the vision of the officers of the Carnegie Corporation and to Chairman Bishop and the many men and women who have worked with him. Mr. Barcus' concluding statement that the fifteen-year program "has been one of the most important events in the history of American college libraries and . . . its beneficial effects will continue to be felt for years" is abundantly justified.—*William H. Carlson, associate librarian, University of Washington Library, Seattle.*